

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KIM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 265.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

RESIGNATION FROM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

The Speaker pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation from the Committee on Education and the Workforce:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 6, 1998.

Speaker NEWT GINGRICH,
Republican Steering Committee, The Capitol,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER GINGRICH, This is to officially request a temporary leave of absence from the Education and Workforce Committee, effective immediately.

Because of my additional two Committee assignments and other pressing commitments, I have determined that this temporary change is necessary for the balance of the 105th Congress. Chairman Hoekstra and I have discussed this at length, and I understand one of our colleagues has expressed an interest in being appointed to the Education and Workforce Committee, with an assignment being made to the Oversight & Investigation Subcommittee.

I would ask that my seniority be preserved so that, should I chose to be reappointed to the Education and Workforce Committee at the beginning the 106th Congress it would be to my current position.

Thank you for consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

JOE SCARBOROUGH.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted.

There was no objection.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON H.R. 2646, EDUCATION SAVINGS ACT FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1 of rule XX, and by the direction of the Committee on Ways and Means, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 2646) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow tax-free expenditures from education individual retirement accounts for elementary and secondary school expenses, to increase the maximum annual amount of contributions to such accounts, and for other purposes, with a Senate amendment thereto, disagree to the Senate amendment, and request a conference with the Senate thereon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT OFFERED BY MR. RANGEL.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I offer a motion to instruct.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. RANGEL. moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendments to the bill H.R. 2646, the Education Savings Act for Public and Private Schools, be instructed to agree to provisions relating to tax-favored financing for public school construction consistent, to the maximum extent possible within the scope of conference, with the approach taken in H.R. 3320, the Public School Modernization Act of 1998.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) will be recognized for 30 minutes, and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARCHER) will be recognized for 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL).

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, nearly all Americans know that the most important issue facing us today is educating our young people to meet the challenges of tomorrow, especially as we move into the next century. It is going to be an era that, with all of the inventions and all of the wonders that we have accomplished in this century, will be absolutely nothing compared to what we have to face in the next century.

It is really so painful to see my Republican friends, instead of stepping up to the bar and asking, "What can we do in a bipartisan way to make certain that our children are not used as ammunition in this great political fight that we have," so that at least we know, when the dust has settled, that we have a sound public school system that would train our kids and help our kids to be able to meet these challenges.

Instead of that, we have before us a bill that tells people, "Save your money, enjoy tax-free benefits; and this is what we, as the majority party, have to offer you."

Thank God we have people that can read in this country, that can see through the farce that is before us. If everything works the way the authors of the bills work, then in the period of a year, those who are fortunate enough to be able to send their kids to private school will have savings of \$37. And because they want to make it abundantly clear that this is not restricted to the private sector, there should be savings of \$7 a year for the kids in the public school.

How short our memory is when the millions of people who came to this country, so many without training, seeking a better way of life, looking for religious freedom, but better than that, wanting to make life better for their children, where we had a public school system that was there for them. Instead of reaching out, trying to destroy the system and substituting it with vouchers and tax loopholes, we should be saying that in this country of ours, every kid should be able to get a decent education.

It is absolutely disgraceful to think that we are just giving interest-free money when what we do have in the motion to instruct is an opportunity to vote for that motion to tell the conferees to come up with a bill that would modernize our schools and provide the funds that are there tax free for construction of decent public schools in this great country of ours.

What a shame it is that we have prisoners locked up in jails and locked up in penitentiaries that have better quarters than the kids have in our schools. I have visited schools throughout my district and throughout the country where kids cannot be in a classroom when it rains, where kids are in overcrowded situations. And these are the public schools.

They may not like them because the common man and the common woman have to send their kids there, but 90 percent of American youngsters go to these public schools. How can they be ignored? And what benefits can they get from this bill? We cannot take the money out of an individual savings account and rebuild a school or provide adequate space for the kids. It is a farce to do this, and it is even worse if we relate it to education.

So we have to be appreciative of two things: one, that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are not serious, and that is good because it means that they do not want to do harm; one, they have allocated the money to pay for this bill with every bill they think the President is going to veto. And so, they are not serious, but it is a terrible, political thing to do.

And second, they know that the President is serious about the education of our children and will veto this farce so that the tax burden will not be on the American people.

So I ask my colleagues, please, when the appropriate time comes, let us instruct the conferees to come up with something decent, something that would improve our school system; and then we by agreement with our voters, Republicans and Democrats alike, will say that we have differences, but those differences are not so great that we are going to sacrifice the education of the American children.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ARCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the education of our children is one of the most important issues that our Nation faces. Part of our educational system is outstanding; it is competitive with the world, if not better than the rest of the world. But there are other parts of our educational system that are falling behind.

Every day our moral and social fabric is strengthened when our children receive strong educations. As children learn and grow, we as a Nation are enriched.

Unfortunately, the state of education in America today is not as good in